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Globalizing ‘Global Studies’: Vehicle for Disciplinary and Regional Bridges?

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Abstract

The most contentious and critical questions of contemporary times relate to the nature, scope, impact and conceptualization of globalization. The intensified impact of globalization and the acceptance that it is a contemporary social reality has manifested itself noticeably in a variety of disciplines. However, the inherently multidimensional processes of globalization demand new insights. The resultant rise of a Global Studies approach is expected to be unencumbered by dominant perspectives and existing academic loyalties by placing global theorizing and issues first. In light of this context, the paper raises several epistemological and ontological questions while outlining the broad contours of this emerging field. The analysis is based on academic literature as well as the examination of a selection of global studies programs in academic institutions to ascertain the contemporary application and perceptions of what constitutes global studies. The ensuing discussion explains why global studies is regarded as an overwhelmingly North American phenomenon. Finally, the paper suggests ways of broadening the disciplinary lens, which may also help global studies to overcome the wide regional divide.

KEYWORDS: globalization, epistemology, global studies, GLST programmes, multidisciplinary, historical and regional scope

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been termed as “the greatest reorganization of the world since the industrial revolution” (Aronica & Ramdoo, 2006: 17). The concept of globalization emerged in sociology in the 1960s and has gained tremendous popularity and notoriety since the 1990s. In its broadest definition, it encompasses the multiplicity of supra-national forces that are affecting the contemporary world. It is defined as a process, an historical event or the result of shifting “ethno-, techno, media-, finance-, and ideo-scapes” (Appadurai, 1996), to which we could add environmental and social-scapes as well. Little wonder then that globalization has been credited with everything from the shrinking to the “flattening” of the world; for the “Americanization” of the world as well as for the offshore outsourcing of American jobs; for the creation of a technologically oriented “network society” as well as for the destruction of the rainforests.

The analysis of the origins, nature, scope, and impact of globalization is perhaps the single most important debate in the social sciences currently. The burgeoning literature on globalization and the issues thrown up by associated developments are reviving several ideological debates in a variety of disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and beyond. The rapidly changing contemporary world coupled with the tumultuous academic churning is partially responsible for the emergence of global studies (GLST) as a field of enquiry. Despite the incongruities surrounding the definition of GLST,¹ the general consensus appears to be a construct around a world-centric perspective drawing from a variety of disciplines but not contained within any specific boundaries of frameworks.

This paper is an attempt to bring together elements of the globalization debate and its application by examining the curriculum of GLST being offered in a host of institutions. Methodologically, it is neither traditional historiography nor a discourse analysis; it does however argue for valuing diverse texts and applicability as being critical to understanding the nature and conception of emerging concepts, approaches and perspectives. The survey is limited to majors, programmes and degrees of GLST at an undergraduate level offered by teaching units such as departments, centres, schools and institutions within designated universities. The sample size is by no means exhaustive; however, it is large enough to identify broad trends.

¹ See the most representative versions of the definition of GLST in the following sources – Global Studies Association: <http://www.globalstudiesassociation.org/index.html>; Asia Association for Global Studies: <http://asia-globalstudies.org/home>; University of Pittsburgh: <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/global/about.html>; Freiburg University, Germany: <http://www.global-studies.de/objectives/object.htm>

Data was collected using electronically available information from universities and institutions in the technology enabled parts of the English-speaking world. Personal experience and networks within Africa and Asia were an added source of invaluable information and insights. Despite the large number of centers for area-studies and academic units dealing with thematic issues of international affairs and globalization, the absence of centers of “Global Studies” outside North America was the most startling initial finding and has been dealt with in some detail in the paper. Therefore, a secondary focus of the paper is to engage with the reasons for the lack of popularity of the “Global Studies” tag in the non-North American context and to argue for a more “global” Global Studies.

GLOBAL STUDIES: AN EMERGING DISCIPLINE?

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a revival of scholarly debates on the subject matter of international studies. Many scholars note that concepts like ‘international relations’ and ‘international politics’ are no longer adequate. Rather, with the accelerated process of globalization, they tend to adopt the use of such terms as ‘world politics’ or ‘global politics’ to define their field of scholarship. Consequently, since 1995, along with the proliferation of scholarly and popular literature on globalization, only a few academic units of GLST have appeared in North America despite the existence of hundreds of academic units concerned with the study of international and/or world affairs.

GLST includes the notion of a common discipline as well as shared thematic concerns as the basis for intellectual activity. It can be defined as the study of processes that have brought different areas of the world into closer contact. These processes can be historical, economic, political, cultural, technological, environmental or linguistic. The nature and impact of these processes varies within geographical, historical and cultural spaces. The challenge is to conceptualize the world as a composite interconnected whole – in terms of issues, agencies, institutions and histories. Therefore, a global approach needs to broaden the scope of world history, cultures, societies, agency and institutions, to include the various regions of the world into our analysis and not treat them as separate and/or peripheral entities on the margins of a ‘global’ analysis.

Some of the issues in GLST include conceptual problems involved in the attempts to characterize globalization - the issues of governance and state power, changing patterns of cultures, the evolution of the world economy, global inequality, environmental challenges and the role of technology, among others. Furthermore, the interplay of global forces and national/local level variations has created conditions of economic and political mobilization due to persistent inequality, discrimination and repression. Understanding globalization, therefore, demands new insights for these inherently multidimensional and apparently

contradictory processes. It necessitates scholarly inquiry to rise beyond the frameworks provided by particular disciplines with long-established scholarly interests and leanings, which sometimes pre-date the phenomenon of contemporary globalization.

Contemporary globalization discourse, however, is often dominated by the legacies of nineteenth century Western analyses which created sophisticated hierarchies of humanity, and which assumed a world constituted by discrete and contrasting traditions, religions, economies and cultures whose minimal interactions ensured internal consistencies. This essentialization of difference permeates popular reflections on globalization such as the *End of History* (Fukuyama, 1992), *Jihad versus McWorld* (Barber, 1995), *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington, 1997), *Lexus and the Olive Tree* (Friedman, 2000), *Islam versus 'Modernity'* (Lewis, 2002), *the Flat World* (Friedman, 2006), and others that juxtapose contending forces hinging on incommensurable differences based on separate historical trajectories. Such perspectives ignore, and indeed conceal, the interdependent and interrelated human networks of histories. Contemporary globalization rhetoric often reduces the past to a "one dimensional foil" (Matory, 2005: 9) and is a result of the forgetting and silencing of histories of interrelation or the "inter-networking of networks across space" (Prestholdt, 2008: 3) and time.

This is not to suggest that there is nothing new about contemporary patterns and processes of globalization. Ubiquitous, mobile and integrated technology is the most striking and unique aspect of the new Millennium which has linked nations, people and cultures, and is redefining economies, societies, labor and knowledge in ways like never before. The convergence of communications and computing is creating intercontinental patterns of interactions among people, communities and corporations, which often defy political, geographical and economic boundaries. The speed, scope and scale of these movements and changes are significantly greater than in any other historical period. Particularly, this period is marked by an interlinked, near universal, capitalist economy, growing share of knowledge and information processing sectors, rapid urbanization, universal threats to and consciousness of ecological preservation, and the "emergence of a network society, based on a space of flows, and on timeless time" (Castells, 2000: 367).

For the study of globalization in its various manifestations, it is indeed more convenient to work with smoother models but this leads to ignoring and/or silencing of vast regions of the world, which are nevertheless affected by the complex processes associated with globalization and the reactions and counter reactions to its ongoing effects. Equally importantly, leaving the vast swaths of people and their histories out of the account of the multi-variegated affects of globalization impoverishes the emerging field of inquiry itself.

Although many popular accounts of simplified globalization persist, however, there is a growing recognition that challenging the notions of historical isolation and global disjuncture. In some ways, the precursors of a more holistic approach are the transnational analyses of Marxist theories, world systems theories, postcolonial studies, feminism, environmentalism and other areas that have contributed significantly to the understanding of the linkages between the local and the global, as well as to the reconfiguration of the local-global dialectic. For instance, Grewal and Kaplan (1994) argue for a conception of multiple globalities and localities, and use the term transnational to cut across the duality of the global and local. The relationship of the local and the global and their mutual inseparability has thus become the subject of much theorizing.

A good example of what the refocusing of the analytical lens can achieve could be seen in the critical reconceptualization of world history with regards to the place of the continent of Africa, which has been connected to forces and trade routes external to the continent via different directions. The continent's historical depth and its placement both within and outside the modern story of globalization, however, remain underrepresented in textbooks and broader conceptualizations of world history and international economy. The study of African history and economy has almost always been a study of outside influences such as those of Arabs, Berbers or Europeans, on Africa and which portrays Africans as passive recipients of change from external sources and not as historical actors. This approach obscures the role of African agency and their various innovations, for example: as active participants in the Atlantic slave trade; as independent discoverers of iron-making; as crucial players in setting the terms of the colonial encounter; and more recently, their survival strategies as a marginalized people in a globalizing context.

Gilbert (2004) offers a number of useful proposals for incorporating Africa into world history such as cross-cultural interaction approach, greater use of comparative history, and "new ways of sub-dividing African history into more practical units of analysis so that the various sub-units can be incorporated into the broader narrative without having to be representative of some abstracted African reality." He provides an excellent example from Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's book *Civilizations*, which organizes the world's civilizations by environments rather than chronology. Mali and Songhai share a chapter on grasslands with North American plains Indians, the Indians of the Pampas, and the Steppe peoples of Eurasia. So instead of being portrayed as late-developing members of the old world civilizations, the people of the West African Sahel are described as the only grassland civilization that was urban. Viewed on a global scale, therefore, Africa's past and present contain the diversity of local and global examples, which remain an untapped resource for enriching the study of globalization.

So, even if the academic debate is striving for a deeper understanding of the interconnected world, how is this understanding being applied to development on the ground, academically? The survey of a host of GLST programmes reveals some interesting facets of this emerging discipline in North America and trends in the rest of the world.

TEACHING GLST

In the simplest terms possible, GLST is the study of globalization in its various manifestations. The Global Studies approach is supposed to be unfettered by narrow analytical lenses, where multi- and inter-disciplinary orientations occupy center stage. This approach requires a central and unambiguous commitment to the importance of drawing upon materials and investigations from a number of disciplines and perspectives, along with an interest in a wide range of themes and concerns. In particular, GLST can be seen as an attempt to establish a more deliberate research agenda involving empirical and qualitative analysis of old and new actors, aspects and dimensions of globalization from a variety of perspectives.

Traditional International Relations/Studies programs provide a range of courses in culture, economics, politics, including foreign language immersions and internships abroad to impart insight into the complexities of international relations and thus would appear to be the logical disciplinary lens to understand globalization. However, since the nation in its various manifestations remains at the center of IR analysis, it limits the analytical perspective in the context of globalization. Partially because of this, and in addition to several other factors mentioned below, there is a growing trend in favor of separating Global Studies from International Relations. To an extent, IR and GLST exist on a continuum, and greater definitional precision may allow both to flourish independently. Nevertheless, a significant boundary is crossed when we enter the study of globalization.

Starting out with the assumption that GLST is a rapidly emerging field of inquiry, which is consciously acquiring a separate identity of its own, this survey intends to find some answers to questions regarding the epistemology and ontology of GLST beyond the academic debates. Therefore, the next section further explores the meaning of GLST through its application as a field of inquiry in academic institutions.

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN GLOBAL STUDIES

The logical starting point for the survey was Internet search for key combinations of words: Global Studies, world systems, globalization, Global Studies Africa,

Global Studies Asia, Global Studies Latin America, Global Studies Europe, Global Studies Australia, etc. This revealed close to twenty programs/degrees of GLST within North America and three from Europe, but nothing from the rest of the world. A new combination of words led to several hundred results: international affairs, international issues, area studies, study of globalization, etc. The cross section of sources used for this paper includes university programs from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia aside from the North American, UK and Asian Associations of GLST.²

As mentioned earlier, this is not an exhaustive list, but the sample size is large enough to put forth certain key patterns. However, it should be noted that the analysis is limited to programs/degrees of GLST at an undergraduate level only. Undergraduate programmes are not only the building blocks of tertiary education, but also signal the acceptance, establishment and/or evolution of an area of study as a discipline.

Seven of the GLST programs surveyed are organised in the table below as an illustration. These reflect the diversity in the size and locations of the institutions covered, as well as the scope of the GLST degrees offered at an undergraduate level. The table below is merely illustrative and does not reflect the

² The following universities were included in the survey and are organized according to region. However, as noted in the paper, only the North American Universities have undergraduate programmes/degrees in GLST. Outside North America, the only GLST degrees are offered by the European programs listed below but these degrees are at the Postgraduate level. The Open University, UK, however, offers an undergraduate degree but in International Studies, much like the rest of the institutions in the list:

Africa: U of Cape Town, U of Kwazulu-Natal, U of Pretoria, U of Stellenbosch, U of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), American U of Nigeria, U of Lagos, U of Nigeria, U of Uyo (Nigeria), U of Makerere (Uganda)

America/Canada: *Alverno Catholic College for Women:* Global Studies and International Affairs, *Arizona State University:* School of Global Studies, *Athabasca U:* Centre for Global and Social analysis, *U of British Columbia:* Liu Institute for Global Issues, *U of California at Riverside:* The Institute for Research on World-Systems (IROWS), *California State University, Monterey Bay:* Global Studies Department, *U of Denver:* Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies (Adult education), *Houston Community College:* Certificate in Global Studies, *U of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:* Global Studies Initiative, *National University (Online):* Global Studies Program, *U of Pittsburgh:* Global Studies Program, *University of California Santa Barbara:* Global and International Studies, *St. Lawrence University:* Global Studies, *U of Tennessee:* Interdisciplinary Program for Global Studies, *U of Victoria:* Centre for Global Studies, *Wilfred-Laurier U:* Global Studies Dept.

Asia: Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi U, U of Mumbai, U of Hyderabad (India), Peking U, Beijing U, Renmin University, Fudan U (China)

Australia/NZ: U of Western Australia, U of South Australia, U of New Castle, U of Sydney, Adelaide U, Curtin U of Technology, U of Notre Dame Australia, U of Wollongong

Europe: *Freiburg University,* The Global Studies Programme (Germany), *Manchester Metropolitan University,* Institute for Global Studies, *U of Warwick,* Centre for the Study of Globalization and Regionalisation (CSGR), The Open University of the UK (Britain)

array of courses surveyed. In total, twenty undergraduate GLST courses (all from North America) and thirty International Relations/Studies programs (all from outside of North America, and are evenly split between undergraduate and postgraduate levels) form the basis of the observations discussed below.

TABLE 1: SELECT UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN GLOBAL STUDIES

Courses	Huron	Malaspina	OU ³	Trent U	UCSB	UCLA	Wilfred-Laurier
Intro ⁴	x	x					x
Inter/Glob ⁵	x	xx	xx	x	xx	x	
Economy	x	xx	x	xxx	xxx	xxxx	x
Development	x		x	xxx	xxxx	xxx	xxxx
Politics	x	xx	x	xxxxx	xxxx	xxxx	x
History			x	xx	x	xx	x
Society	xx		xxx	xxxxx	x	xxx	xxx
Environment	x		xx	xx	xx	xx	xxx
Culture	x		x	xxxxx	xxx	xxx	xxxxxx
Media			x	xx	x	xx	xx
Religion			x	xx	x	x	xx
Conflict			x	x	xx	x	xxxxx
Security			x	x	x	x	xx
Ideologies/Theories	x		x	xxx	xx	x	xx
Literature			x	xx	x	x	xx
Languages	x	x	x	xxx	x	x	x
Gender	x		x	xxxx	xx	x	xxx
Res. Meth.			x	x	x	x	
East Asia	xx		x	xx	xxx	xx	x
Latin Ame.			x	xxx	x	x	x
Middle East			x	xxx	x	x	xx
South Asia			x	xxxx	xx	x	xx
Africa	x		x	xxxx			xx
Europe			x	xxxx	x		xx
Indigenous	x			x			x
Diasporas/Refugees	x			x	x	x	x
Independent	x	xx			xxxx	x	xxx
Internship		x			xx	x	xx

³ Open University, UK. However, the programme is referred to as 'International Studies'

⁴ An overarching introductory course on Global Studies

⁵ Interdisciplinary or 'Globalization' courses, but all of them are at the 300 or 400 levels except at Huron University College (100 level) and Malaspina University College (200 level).

Firstly, there are many centers of Global Studies in the U.S., some in Canada, but in the rest of the world these issues are organised under International Relations, International Studies, Interdisciplinary studies or within disciplinary departments. Outside North America, the concepts of international politics, international relations and international studies are intermingled to describe more or less the same field of study, which is confined mainly to relations between states, the international political system and structure, politics of foreign countries, international political institutions and regimes, international security, foreign policy, international political economy and global governance.

However, the curricula of these International Studies/Relations programs around the world are increasingly much broader than the traditional IR fields. Additionally, a number of centers for strategic studies, policy studies, social systems, governance, etc. appear to be conducting projects beyond what their names seem to imply, shifting their focus more pointedly to global issues. Furthermore, the numerous area studies programs are also contributing more significantly to this focus on a broader, if not exactly global, analysis. In other words, international studies around the world is becoming increasingly consolidated, diversified and pluralized with stronger focus on all the key area of the GLST approach, but this has not led to the implicit acceptance of global studies as a new field outside North America, nor to the re-labelling of the expanded disciplinary focus, which is affecting many of the social science disciplines including IR.

It is easy to be dismissive and regard the preference for *international* over *global* as evidence that these regions have not quite caught up with academic trends in North America; but the larger point is that the preference for international rather than global in the non-American context has an underlying political implication. The aversion to the tag of GLST constitutes a definite contrast with the notion and rhetoric of establishing a new *world* order advocated by the U.S. since roughly 1991, and is reflected in the Global/International divide between the American institutions and the rest of the world. More than in the literature survey, I have found evidence of this aversion in personal interactions with colleagues in different parts of the world.⁶

Furthermore, we cannot underestimate the appeal of equating globalization with neo-imperialism in the developing world. As Hay and Watson

⁶ My educational training in India, a nearly decade-long academic career in South Africa, and current position as an 'immigrant professor' in Canada, has enabled participation in several diverse and dynamic networks in several parts of the world. I find that colleagues involved in program and course development outside North America are invariably very aware of and sensitive about the underlying political implications of the usage of such concepts. Therefore, it would be incorrect to assume that this trend is driven by ignorance, rather than a specific understanding of the contextual usage of this concept.

(1999: 421) point out, “globalization has now come to be used as a rhetorical facade, obscuring any question of active consent for further neo-liberal restructuring and the further embedding of certain forms of privilege—both within the liberal democracies of the advanced capitalist West and, increasingly, between ‘the West and the rest.’” Post 9/11 this point seemed particularly pertinent. However, it would be interesting to see how the current economic meltdown will further reconfigure these conceptions of contemporary times and trends.

Secondly, although dominated by Political Economy and/or Cultural Studies in terms of course options and faculty, none of these programs are based in a central way on either. Faculty members are drawn from the Social Sciences in addition to communication studies, ethics, art history, media studies, geography and environmental studies, among others. Although not universally shared, a generally accepted standard appears to include course offerings in culture/identity and specific global issues (conflict, economy, development, governance, health, technology the environment). These are studied through multiple perspectives as evidenced by the involvement of faculty from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. To a large extent, the common thread that runs through the conceptualisation of GLST programs is the acknowledgement of the world as interrelated, which correlates to Hanvey’s “knowledge of global dynamics.”⁷

Thirdly, the structure of undergraduate GLST degrees varies widely. Indeed the most popular method is to take advantage of the strengths of the various university departments that are involved. Thus there are relatively few required courses for half of these GLST programs (with the exception of UCSB, UCLA and WLU in the table), which rely on many streams or choices of a certain number of credits from a longer lists of courses from disciplinary departments. Additionally, the spectrum of GLST courses ranges from the very comprehensive to the barely global in scope. Most universities in the survey however, belong somewhere in the middle, such as Trent University in the table, which has only a few GLST courses at the 100 and 200 levels, but there is a significant number of courses in disciplinary departments at 300 and 400 levels with a decidedly GLST focus. However, Indigenous/Native Studies courses were most conspicuous by their absence from the list of recommended courses of most institutions surveyed.

Fourthly, there is a noticeable lack of comprehensive introductory courses on GLST. Some of the smaller institutions have a required introductory course in GLST at 100 or 200 levels; however, very few of the bigger universities have such options at the introductory level. Almost all of them offer a course on

⁷ According to Hanvey (1976), global perspective or global awareness involves: perspective consciousness, state-of-the planet awareness, cross cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics and awareness of human choices.

globalization/interdisciplinary study at the higher levels though. Pedagogically, a required introductory course can fulfill some important objectives, such as provide an overview of the possible strategies and approaches to GLST, and introduce the student to interdisciplinarity. The later is particularly important for students of GLST since it teaches them how to identify and remove disciplinary lenses and biases.

It is also important for students to understand that while globalization may be all-pervasive, the experiences and expressions of globality differ from region to region and even within them. For instance, the mangoes on North American supermarket shelves from Ecuador are as much a sign of globalization as the chicken-Chettinaad pizza sold in India by Pizza Hut. But these two examples typify a completely different set of processes and consequences. They can be the starting point of an inquiry which could go in any direction – economic, cultural, environmental, technological, historical, and so on – allowing students to make connections they might not necessarily make within a discipline-bound structure. Therefore, the right introductory course could also set a sound research and methodological foundation for GLST students.

Finally, both in the broad survey of GLST courses and that of major textbooks on globalization,⁸ the problem of geographical and historical limits within which the study of globalization is being conducted are very apparent. This also in part explains the lack of enthusiasm for GLST in many parts of the world, particularly the non-OECD countries, which is linked to their invisibility in the analysis of globalization itself. While a host of definitions exist that deal with various aspects of globalization (Brecher and Harvey 2002; Camilleri and Falk 1992; Held 2000; Mittleman 2000), there appears to be a consistent theoretical and empirical bias with respect to the geographical focus of the majority of these studies. The analysis of globalization is marked by deep debates over what has stimulated this phenomenon, however, these debates remain bound within the preoccupation about how this is affecting the developed world. This not only precludes such studies from being truly global, but also in part explains the reluctance of non- American scholarship to accept the mainstream GLST approach as delineated above.

A significant bulk of literature on globalization claims that the state has been significantly sidelined by the market, which is emerging as the principal means of allotting resources and social well-being (Camillieri & Falk, 1992; Ohmae, 1990; Strange, 1995; 1996). Using the example of Friedman's simplistic view of globalization might be seen as an overstatement of this trend, since

⁸ Admittedly, the literature survey has a disproportionate number of texts which broadly fall within the field of international political economy. This is partially due to my own academic training and partially because these are some of the more systematic international, although not necessarily global, studies of the agents of the processes of globalization.

“borderless world” (Ohmae, 1990), Fukuyama’s (1992) “end of history,” or Friedman’s “Flat World” thesis are the more extreme forms of this non inclusive approach. The less radical “convergence” thesis (Schwartz, 2000; Greider, 1997; Strange, 1988) posits the idea of a shrinking world and a convergence of economies and societies. However, these arguments are still predicated upon examinations of a narrow base of industrialized countries whose experiences and capitalist trajectory are wholly different from the vast majority of the world’s states and peoples. Therefore, while this stance can account for the rise of Indian and South African multinational corporations and their ever increasing economic clout on the African continent, it does not have space for the 40 percent rate of unemployment in South Africa, the continuing economic and political crisis of large parts of Africa, the state driven capitalism of China, the thousands of Indian farmers who have committed suicide in the most agriculturally productive states of India since the onset of the liberalization of the Indian economy and so many more trends in the international system.

Ironically, as Hay and Watson point out, “While the world may indeed be globalized, the experiences of some are clearly more globalized than others” (1999: 420). The rise of private models of accumulation for elites across the world has important implications not only for the vulnerable and the disempowered within their own states, but also for the stability of a number of weak states in the global system, and for the conceptualizing of global studies itself. The extent to which this has occurred is, of course, specific to each state and region. However, the conceptions of such scenarios and debates about their impact, on issues of governance or development for instance, have remained limited to the experiences of the U.S. and Europe. Therefore, developments in the rest of the world, stimulated by globalization-associated processes, are cast as gross aberrations from the liberal norm and the conceptual tools to analyze such strategies are too few. The paper argues that the diversity of economic regimes, histories and the concomitant survival strategies that are often associated with such eclecticism should inform a truly global and progressive epistemological conceptualization of the discipline.

Recent years have seen some studies that are based on broadly contextualized comparative studies of globalization (for instance Guillen, 2001; Biggart & Guillen, 1999). However, this paper argues for more such analysis with a view to provide conceptual tools to analyze agents, trends and strategies stimulated by globalization- related processes that are occurring in the wider world and may not neatly fit contemporary/mainstream understanding of liberal norms and structures.

MAKING 'GLOBAL' MORE INCLUSIVE

One of the rationales for this paper is to argue for a more inclusive approach to the study of globalization. Just like its predecessors, international relations/studies, contemporary GLST displays sure signs of historical and regional blind spots, which have led to incomplete and superficial analysis of the processes of globalization as they unfold in large parts of the world. The dynamics within and between the developing regions of the world are considered at best tangential to the understanding of globalization and relegated to “area studies” instead of being regarded as important components of GLST per se. Consequently, there are few mainstream studies to which these regions or their experiences are central. The problem of the field is thus not in its inability to see the woods for the trees but that it treats some trees as more equal than others.

Furthermore, even though development levels are not converging as a result of globalization, very little recognition or analysis of this is included in the study of globalization within the dominant academy. Too often the global division of wealth and power is taken, if not as natural, then certainly as something seemingly normal and not to be interrogated too deeply or even historically. In practice, this means that the underlying fundamentals and assumptions pertaining both to the market and to the desirability of Western (specifically, U.S.) hegemony are largely unquestioned. The assumptions and discourse that this engenders posits a universality which is largely irrelevant to the analysis on a broader global level.

The broader international context itself is undergoing significant changes that justify a more inclusive orientation of the study of globalization in which the “non-Western” political and economic relationships are not relegated to “area studies” but considered as integral parts of the study of diverse processes of globalization. The changing role of China and India in contemporary times is a compelling case in point. Since 2001, China and India have jointly contributed approximately 30 percent to global output growth and helped hold world output growth above the 4 percent threshold level despite widespread fears of economic recession in other major economies of the world (Goldstein, et al 2006). Their combined strong appetite for energy and metal has boosted international prices for commodities, directly affecting the volume and value of exports. The resultant improved terms of trade have benefited sub-Saharan commodity producers and have fuelled an average 4.2 percent growth rate for the region (IMF, 2007). The rapid growth of China and India has contributed close to 40 percent of global import growth for precious stones, 30 percent for crude oil and 20 percent for metallic ores (Broadman, 2007). Their demand for these commodities is likely to grow, or at least not change from current levels, in the foreseeable future.

This is not just shifting economic geography but it is also raising a variety of other questions related to the impact of emerging economies within their regions and beyond, their relationship with each other as well as with domestic, international and transnational actors. By deploying a comparative examination of how globalization has made itself felt variously around the world, GLST could avoid not only its inherent Eurocentrism/America-centrism but would also protect further studies from being overly parochial. What is needed are contextualized comparative studies of globalization's variegated processes across the globe—in both developed and developing states and by bringing in questions of development, and historical continuities and change within societies, nations and the global system.

Hoogvelt (1997) points that globalization is creating a social rather than geographic division. This is leading to the reconfiguration of North-South dichotomies enabled by the variegated patterns of globalization. While the list of billionaires is growing across the developmental divide, poverty among homeless, working poor and children is on the rise in developed countries as well. Such patterns of inclusion/exclusion call for a rethinking of conceptual tools and the acknowledgment that underdevelopment and increasing inequality are a transnational problematic rather than one that concerns only the South. The task before us then is to attempt to integrate the study of globalization into a discipline that does not take at face value the assumptions and ontology of a specific orthodoxy, rather to establish a discipline based on a progressive and inclusive conceptualisation of the study of globalization.

In the context of broadening the disciplinary horizon, a broader understanding of history can play a very useful role. A broad and long term view is useful in identifying, analyzing and predicting the junctures, agents and processes of change in a historically dynamic context. For instance, most studies of international economy seem to base their analysis in a historical vacuum and do not take into account the fact that a well established Afro-Asian capitalist economy and trade was the greater part of the world economy until the threshold of the Industrial Revolution. Venables (2006, p. 63) provides a highly aggregated representation of the global economy in a chart indicating four phases of world GDP accruing to different regions. Using 1700 as the starting point, it shows the initial dominance of Asia in the international economy, followed by the rapid growth of Europe during and after the industrial revolution. Then the subsequent rise of North America, and the ongoing resurgence of Asia which has accelerated in recent decades.

The understanding and acknowledgement of the historical context is not only important to counter the prevalent Afro-pessimism, and the essentialization of differences between peoples, but also to contextualize the dynamic nature of the international system. For instance, Andre Gunder Frank, in his book *Global*

Economy in the Asian Age (1998) posits that the global economy was centered on China until 1800 AD, that the main economic players of those two millennia were China, India and Japan assisted by Russia, Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Western Europe was able to participate in it only belatedly and that too only by extracting precious metals from the Western Hemisphere, particularly through the conquest of the Americas and the exploitation of its silver deposits.

Other studies explain how Western European Societies made the leap into industrialization and world domination (See Pomeranz, 2000; Pomeranz and Topik, 2006). In particular, they rebut prior explanations of European success, demonstrating that there was little difference in all the important variables between China, Japan and Western Europe. The uniquely and specifically European feature was the existence of state sponsored and directed overseas expansion, as a function of dynastic/nascent state competition within Europe, a factor which was absent in China. Pomeranz takes particular pains to attack the triumphant notion that “free markets” lead inexorably to modernization. He sees European capitalism as a key to development of industrialization but only as a very particular form of capitalism unique to Europe at the time. This was the state sponsored or directed capitalism that drove overseas expansion, which can be seen as happening in this century in China’s current economic strategy. This peculiar form of capitalism, not the untrammelled free market, became the key to European imperialism and colonialism, and the development of key capitalist institutions. Also, the success of this peculiar capitalism was contingent on a series of external factors beyond European control; access to coerced labour made possible by the existence of slavery in Africa, conquest of the Western Hemisphere made possible by the epidemiologic advantages of Europeans, and the establishment of trans global trading networks created by the thirst of China for American silver. Therefore, the analysis of Frank and Pomeranz, offers useful correctives to the prevailing Eurocentric economic-historical timelines... or the propensity to not look beyond Europe and/or North America for patterns, trends, models and even histories.

CONCLUSION

The rationale for the emergence of GLST and its separate identity is linked to the very nature of the phenomenon of globalization. Undoubtedly, GLST is emerging as the intellectual home for individuals who share a common commitment to enhancing the understanding of emergent global society, polity and economy. However, both the research and teaching of this emergent field are marred by biases which prevent a truly ‘global’ enquiry from evolving into a discipline.

Despite the claim to be studying a global phenomenon, it is still rare within mainstream studies and degrees of globalization to see any in-depth

coverage of processes currently energizing large parts of the developing world from perspectives that recognize local nuances or experiences. This is highly ethnocentric and collapses the diverse experiences of world societies; and explains the lack of enthusiasm for the field outside North America. A global approach needs to recognize that the effects of globalization processes may be uneven, incomplete and generative of a gamut of responses that remain hidden and unrecognized by mainstream analyses. Furthermore, the superficial treatment of this complex phenomenon results in the silencing of historical and contemporary experiences and roles of a vast majority of humanity. The task of a truly global approach should then be to seek to define historically the structures which are expressed through political and other agency globally, rather than looking for mirror images of the Western experiences.

As an emergent field which is consciously carving a separate identity from traditional paradigms, GLST has the potential to overcome the orthodoxy and ontology which has limited fields such as international studies to fully engage with the complex processes of globalization. However, a systematic evaluation of the concept, approach and methodology of GLST is required with an eye to rectifying the skewed focus and blind spots. The study of globalization, therefore, needs to acknowledge continuities as well as change, complex causation rather than singular driving forces, negative as well as positive aspects, and the freedom to challenge existing conceptualizations, approaches as well as omissions. These developments need to inform future academic enquiry as well as the development of courses and programs in GLST which can offer a more holistic approach to understanding the nature and impact of globalization.

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